Amendments to the Claims

Please amend the claims as follows.

1.   (Withdrawn) An input device for use with a system operable to process an electronic communication comprising:

a function button operably associated with selecting a specific electronic communication function; and

an identification key operable to identify the input device in response to a user selecting the function button.

2.   (Withdrawn) The device of Claim 1, further comprising memory operable to store the identification key.

3.   (Withdrawn) The device of Claim 2, wherein the memory may be periodically updated to include a new identification key.

4.   (Withdrawn) The device of Claim 1, wherein the identification key comprises a user password.

5.   (Withdrawn) The device of Claim 1, wherein the electronic communication function comprises a send button.

6.   (Withdrawn) The device of Claim 1, wherein the electronic communication function comprises a forward button.

7.   (Withdrawn) The device of Claim 1, further comprising a keyboard.

8.   (Withdrawn) The device of Claim 1, further comprising a pointing device.

9.   (Withdrawn) The device of Claim 1, further comprising the function button operably associated with selecting an email function.

10.   (Currently Amended) A method for providing an identifier for processing an electronic communication comprising:

receiving a request via an input device to process the electronic communication, the requested process selected from the group consisting of a forward request, a send request, a save request, a delete request, a reply request and a check request;

determining an identification key ~~operable to identify~~ **associated with the input device, the identification key uniquely identifying** the input device; and

processing the electronic communication using the requesting process upon validating the identification key.

11.   (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising:

accessing a portion of memory to determine the identification key;

receiving the identification key from the input device; and

comparing the received identification key to a the stored identification key to determine if the input is valid.

12.   (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising:

receiving the request via a port operably associated with the input device;

receiving the identification key from the input device; and

verifying the request and the identification key.

13.   (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising:

quarantining the electronic communication if the identification key is not valid; and

notifying a user of the quarantined electronic communication.

14.   (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising:

determining if the request originated from the input device; and

processing the request if the input originated at the input device.

15.   (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising:

determining an identification key for the input device; and

storing the identification key within a memory associated with the input device.

16.   (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising:

determining an electronic communication process associated with the input

device; and

associating the function with one or more buttons associated with the input device.

17.   (Original) The method of Claim 16, further comprising receiving an input from a

user to select the one or more function buttons.

18.   (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising displaying a function

button within a user interface associated with the input device.

19.   (Original) The method of Claim 10, further comprising associating an encrypted

device identifier within the electronic communication upon processing the electronic

communication.

20.   (Withdrawn) A system operably associated with processing an electronic

communication in the form of an email comprising:

a processor operable to process the email;

memory operably coupled to the processor; and

an input device operably coupled to the processor, the processor operable to

validate a user request via the input device to process an email.

21.   (Withdrawn) The system of Claim 20, wherein the input device comprises a

keyboard including a identification key operable to identify a user request via the keyboard to

process the email.

22.   (Withdrawn) The system of Claim 21, wherein the keyboard comprises memory operable to store the identification key.

23.   (Withdrawn) The system of Claim 20, further comprising a pointing device including an identification key operable to identify a user request via the pointing device to process the email.

24.   (Withdrawn) The system of Claim 20, further comprising a graphical user interface operable to display an email software program.

25.　　(Currently Amended)　A method for processing an electronic communication in the form of email using a system comprising:

determining an input device operably coupled to the system;

determining an identification key ~~operably~~ associated with the input device**, the identification key uniquely identifying the input device**; and

processing an email upon receiving a valid request from the input device to either forward, send, save, delete, reply, or check the email.

26.　　(Original)　The method of Claim 25, further comprising:

determining a function button operably associated with the input device; and

receiving an input to process the email via a user selecting the function button.

27.　　(Original)　The method of Claim 25, further comprising:

receiving an input from the input device to process the email;

verifying the input device is valid; and

processing the email based on the verification.

28.　　(Original)　The method of Claim 27, further comprising processing the email using a function associated with the requested process upon the input device being valid.

29.　　(Original)　The method of Claim 28, further comprising associating an encrypted identifier with the email.

30.　　(Original)　The method of Claim 28, further comprising:

quarantining the email upon the input device determining the input device is not valid; and

notifying a user of the quarantined email.

31.   (Original) An input device for use with a system operable to process an electronic communication comprising:

means for receiving a request via an input device to process an electronic communication;

means for determining an identification key operable to identify the input device; and

means for processing the email using the requesting process upon validating the identification key.

32.   (Original) The input device of Claim 31, further comprising:

means for accessing a portion of memory determine the identification key;

means for receiving the identification key from the input device; and

means for comparing the received identification key to a the stored identification key to determine if the input is valid.

33.   (Original) The method of Claim 31, further comprising:

means for receiving a request via a port operably associated with the input device;

means for receiving the identification key from the input device; and

means for verifying the request and the identification key.

34.   (Original) A medium including encoded logic for processing electronic communications comprising the logic operable to:

    determine an input device operably coupled to the system;

    determine an identification key ~~operably~~ associated with the input device**, the identification key uniquely identifying the input device**; and

    process an electronic communication upon receiving a valid request from the input device to process the email.

35.   (Original) The medium as recited in Claim 34, further comprising the logic operable to:

    determine a function button operably associated with the input device; and

    receive an input to process the email via a user selecting the function button.

36.   (Original) The medium as recited in Claim 35, further comprising the logic operable to:

    receive an input from the input device to process the email;

    verify the input device is valid; and

    process the electronic communication based on the verification.

37.   (Original) The medium as recited in Claim 35, further comprising the logic operable to process the electronic communication using a function associated with the requested process upon the input device being valid.